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'T WAS A STORM OF FIRE.

Awful Experience of Steamer Roddam at St. Pierre.

SEA CAPTAIN'S GRAPHIC STORY.

It Rained Fire and the Sea Was Like Unto Boiling Mud.

The Norton line steamer Etona arrived at New York recently from the River Plata via St. Lucia, where she called for bunker coal on May 10. "At St. Lucia on May 11," says Captain Cantell, "I went on board the British steamer Roddam, which had escaped from the terrible volcanic eruption at Martinique three days before. The state of the ship was enough to show that those on board must have undergone an awful experience. The Roddam was covered with a mass of fine bluish gray dust or ashes of cement like appearance. In some parts it laid two feet deep on the decks. This matter had fallen in a red hot state all over the steamer, setting fire to everything it struck that was burnable and, when it fell on the men on board, burned off little bits and large pieces of flesh. This was shown by finding portions of human remains when the decks were cleared of the debris. The rigging, ropes, tarpaulins, sails, awnings, etc., were charred or burned and most of the upper stanchions and spars had been swept overboard before. Skylights were smashed and cabins were filled with volcanic dust. The scene of ruin was deplorable.

"I visited the captain of the Roddam in the hospital at St. Lucia, where he gave me an account of his terrible experience. He had just arrived and anchored at St. Pierre, Martinique, on the morning of Thursday, May 8. The captain was standing near the accommodation ladder talking to the agent of the vessel, who had come on board, when he saw what appeared to be an enormous black cloud, like a wall with patches of fire in it, approaching the sea from the land. With it came an immense tidal wave of boiling water, accompanied by a loud and terrible noise. He shouted 'take shelter' to the crew. Immediately the steamer was caught and tossed over on her side, almost capsizing. Darkness fell like a pall and volumes of red hot matter showered down, while the air was thick with sulphurous fumes and dust. The sea was a confused mass of boiling mud.

"Fire soon broke out in different parts of the ship. Screams, groans and shouts of agony from the injured people, mingled with the terrible noises of boiling water and rushing air, together with the falling fire, caused a most horrible confusion and fright. The shock lasted a few minutes.

"The captain of the Roddam, knowing that his vessel had steam up, and instantly realizing the necessity of escape, rushed to the engine room annunciator and signaled below to start the engine at full speed. The anxious moments increased by his sufferings from burns and agony of mind, were relieved by the vibration of the engines and the reply from below. It happened, fortunately, that although the crew had been rung off duty at the engines, some of the engineers were nearby. The terrible tidal wave which had swept over the Roddam and nearly capsize her, had parted the cable, and the vessel was adrift. When the engines started it was found that the steering gear had become disabled in some manner, and could not be worked. For nearly an hour the Roddam's engines were worked, backing and going ahead, with the hope of bringing her head toward the sea, and away from the land. Once she got dangerously near the steamer Roraima. Both vessels were in flames. Some of those aboard jumped into the boiling water; some fell dying to the deck. All this time the red hot matter was falling, and the water was hissing and steaming dense masses of vapor. Smoke and dust filled the air and poisonous fumes

spread about. After some time the Roddam's steering gear moved a little and enabled the captain to head her out to sea, and with considerable difficulty, he managed to steer her a little distance from the land. As the air cleared the scene on board the ill fated Roddam became all the more ghastly. The ship steamed on through thick hot dust. The screams from the injured became more audible. Some rushed frantically about with their clothes on fire and large pieces of flesh burned from their arms; others in their agony laid writhing in the red hot dust.

"In about two hours the air became gradually clear. An investigation of the casualties on board showed that, besides the captain, who was frightfully injured, only two engineers, two sailors and the boatswain were able to do duty.

"Fire was still burning about the ship and the rigging was in flames. The captain decided to try to reach the island of St. Lucia, forty miles distant. This he succeeded in doing by 6 o'clock on the evening of May 8. The steamer was difficult to handle, owing to the partially disabled steering gear, which could not be made to work properly. In the time occupied on this terrible voyage, the experience of the survivors was still worse than that already gone through. The brave captain and his few men fighting the fire, exhausted and scalded, struggled and worked, trying to do something to assist their dying shipmates. Those working below strived to keep up the steam. The captain, suffering the greatest agony, succeeded in navigating his vessel safely to the port of Castries, St. Lucia, with eighteen dead bodies lying on the deck and human limbs scattered about. A sailor stood by constantly wiping the captain's injured eyes. I think the performance of the Roddam's captain was most wonderful, and the more so when I saw his pitiful condition. I do not understand how he kept up; yet when the steamer arrived at St. Lucia and medical assistance was procured, this brave man asked the doctors to attend to the others first and refused to be treated until this was done.

"My interview with the captain brought out this account. I left him in good spirits and receiving every comfort. The sight of his face would frighten anyone not prepared to see it. We sailed from St. Lucia on the morning of May 11, and at 2 o'clock in the afternoon passed the island of Martinique. The weather was perfectly clear, and we had a good view of that part of the island which had suffered by the volcanic eruption a few days before. The formation of the island is quite altered and the whole northern part, where the town of St. Pierre once stood, is covered with a mass of ashes and lava. At about 2:30 o'clock, as the Etona was passing the island, a tremendous upshoot of smoke and dust took place, and in a few moments the ship was covered with fine dust like cement. We were about three miles distant from the island at the time. The ship's engines were put under full speed and for a time considerable anxiety was felt on board. For an hour or two the ship was covered with dust and enveloped in a thick cloud, and the air was filled with sulphur fumes. It must have been another eruption, and the dust must have been sent a great distance in the air, because it traveled against the wind and at a tremendously rapid rate."

Cottage Burned.

The cottage home of Charles Tolbert, colored, together with its contents, was destroyed by fire Wednesday afternoon. The cottage was situated on College hill, near the water tower, and owing to its inaccessible situation and the absence of plugs in that section it was impossible for the fire department to render telling assistance. Surrounding houses were saved with difficulty.

On account of conflicting dates at the New Grand opera house the society programme of the high school will take place on Wednesday instead of Thursday night. Seats will be on sale at Greenshaw & Young's beginning Saturday. 25 cents to all parts of the house.

QUEEN ISLAND IS FREE AT LAST.

Independence Formally Given to Cuba on Tuesday of This Week.

THE UNITED STATES WITHDRAWS ITS FORCES.

Ceremony of Transfer Very Simple—It is Now President Estrada Palma.

Cuba was merged into an independent republic on Tuesday of this week, the following account of which is given by an American correspondent on duty at Havana.

The natal day of the republic of Cuba found Havana arrayed like a queen to await the coming of her lord. She seemed reinvested for the occasion with the dignity of the prosperous days of her power and wealth. The decorations were universal. In some cases men had worked all night, by the light of torches to complete elaborate designs. There was not a residence, pretentious or humble, that did not bear upon its quaint facade some emblem in honor of the event. The many arches erected at the entrances of plazas by political societies, fraternal clubs, residents of various civil divisions of the city and business organizations had an air of real grandeur. The scaffolding was covered with canvass painted in imitation of marble, and from a distance the illusion was complete. Bunting spread on venetian masts canopied the deep, narrow streets from the rays of the sun. Beneath these canopies the Cuban colors and palms graced the open door ways, through which glimpses could be caught of luxuriant gardens, in cool, inner courts. Many of the balconies jutting from the white walled buildings were adorned with roses.

Nature seemed in harmony with the spirit of the festivities. The parks were literally aflame with tropical flowers, and the vaulted sky above might have been chiseled out of turquoise. Above every red, tiled roof rose a Cuban flag. The whole city seemed suddenly buried beneath a forest of waving banners.

The decorations along the water front were exceedingly lavish, and all the shipping in the harbor was dressed in gala attire. The majority of the ships flew the American ensign at the main, and the Cuban colors at the fore or mizzen. The United States armored cruiser Brooklyn, which was sent to take General Wood away, and the steamer Morro Castle, of the Ward line, on which the troops were to embark, as well as the foreign warships which had been sent by their governments to be present at the birth of the new republic, were gallily decorated.

During the early morning many troops of school children marched into the Plaza de Armas, ranged themselves before the palace and sang an American anthem.

At 10 o'clock a delegation from the Central Veteran's Club presented General Wood with a handsome machete, having a beautifully engraved hilt. It has the Cuban coat of arms and a single gold star on one side, and the general's initials on the other in gold.

The palace is an imposing yellow stone structure, the upper stories of its front being built over a stone colonnade, giving it a fine architectural effect. For centuries it was the residence of the captains general of Spain. Since the American occupation it has been the official headquarters of the military governor. It fronts an exquisite park, the Plaza de Armas, with its stately royal palms and species of banyan trees called "laurels of India." In the center is a fine marble statue of Ferdinand VII. Through the center of the building an archway leads, as in all Spanish palaces, to the court, where a statue of Columbus arises from a mass of palms and flowering plants. On either side of the entrance marble stairways ascend to the audience room, which opens through balconied windows upon the plaza.

In this chamber the actual transfer occurred. It is an imposing room,

oblong, with a lofty ceiling and marble floor. It formed a fine setting for the historic occasion. The chamber is today exactly as it was when the Spaniards departed, except that the portraits of the captains general which hung upon its walls are gone. They were taken back to Spain, but the coats of arms, with their royal quarterings, still hang above the windows, which are screened by the same scarlet curtains that were hanging during the Spanish regime. The decorations, white and gold, with superb mirrors, have also been preserved, just as they were left by the Spaniards. The chair with a gold crown above its back, which was reserved for the Spanish monarch himself, was visible in an adjoining apartment.

Owing to the limited space, the people were to have no sight of the ceremony to be enacted here which was to constitute them a nation before the world, but outside they were to witness a spectacle which would stir their pulses, for they were to see the beloved five-barred and single-starred flag which Gespedes first threw to the breeze in 1808, at the opening of the ten years' war, raised by the act of the United States above the palace. This thing which was to happen had been the dream of their lives, and of their ancestors for generations. Their parents, brothers and friends had gone to their deaths to accomplish it.

No strange wonder then that, hours before the time set, they began flocking here from all quarters of the city. Many were already before the palace with the rising sun, and some even slept in the park to be certain not to miss this sight.

A portion of the plaza was kept clear by the police very early. The remainder was packed with people, so thick that the grounds seemed alive. Soon all the side streets running into the plaza were choked into a solid mass of humanity, and every door and window fronting the square was walled in with faces, white and black, old and young, male and female. Then crowds sought the roofs, overflowing every building that commanded a view of the flagstaff on the palace. As far as the eye could see the roof lines were fringed with human freight. It was a sight to live forever in memory.

Drawn up below, in the open space of the plaza, were eight dismounted troops of the Seventh cavalry, with sabers at their heels. Their horses were already on board the steamer which was to take them back to the United States.

Shortly before 11:30 a. m. those who were to witness the ceremony began to arrive in carriages through a street kept clear by the police. All the naval officers were arrayed in full uniform, resplendent in gold braid and plumed chapeaux. The Cubans generally wore black frock suits, white waistcoats and silk hats. They formed a distinguished looking assemblage as they gathered in the audience chamber.

The ceremony itself was brief and simple. After formal greetings, General Wood read the documentary transfer prepared by the war department, pledging the new government immediately to proclaim the constitution and the Platt amendment contained in the appendix and to undertake all obligations assumed by the United States with respect to Cuba by the treaty of Paris.

Senator Palma attached his signature to the document as president of the republic after an exchange of congratulations and the old veteran, General Gomez, ascended the roof of the palace. He was instantly recognized and met with a great demonstration of welcome. General Wood himself stood the balcony from the flag-

staffs and lowered the American colors. As they fluttered down, the cavalry below saluted their flag, and, like an echo of the cheers that arose, came the distant boom of one of the great guns of Cabanas fortress, across the bay.

It was followed by another and another, in rhythmic succession until forty-five shots had been fired, one for each state in the union. As the first gun spoke, the flags on Moro castle and those on the Santa Clara and Punta fortresses were lowered. The jurisdiction of the United States had ended.

In the meantime a Cuban flag had been kept on the balyards of the palace flagstaff, and by his own hands General Wood raised it as an act of the United States, General Gomez assisting him.

As the flag flew free, the streets below fairly waved with the cheer that arose.

It was caught up by the people on the roofs and rolled over the city. Again the cavalry below saluted and again the guns of Cabanas spoke, this time with a national salute of twenty-one guns. The bands stationed on the plaza, at Cabanas and at Malecon crashed out with pride of country, and the revenue cutters and battle-ships in the harbor thundered their strength of war. The foreign warships hoisted the flag of Cuba to their mastsheads. The ensigns of Great Britain and Italy had recognized the republic.

Married Thursday Evening.

At eight o'clock Thursday evening, at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Taylor, of this city, occurred the marriage of Miss Sallie Elizabeth Taylor and Mr. Thomas S. Fletcher. The ceremony that tied the nuptial knot was performed by the Rev. J. C. Given, pastor of the Methodist church, South, and was witnessed by a number of the relatives and friends of the high contracting parties.

Mr. Fletcher is a young man of exemplary habits and splendid reputation in Lexington, where he was reared. He is a trusted employee of the Lexington Coal company and has a bright business future. The bride was also born and raised in Lexington, is a lady of beautiful character and has hosts of friends who extend to her congratulations.

Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher will reside with Mr. Fletcher's mother on College street.

Once Lived in Lafayette.

Joplin, Mo., May 20.—Mrs. Lizzie Ann Avery Duncan of Vernon county, Mo., is the mother of a remarkable family. She is the head of five living generations, having six children, twenty-four grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. "Grandma" Duncan, as she is called, is in her 83d year and is healthy and active. She was born near Bowling Green, Ky., and moved with her family to Lafayette county, Mo., in 1890. She was married when 21 years old and settled with her husband in Vernon county in 1843. There all the children were born and there the old homestead still stands.

Grandma Duncan's grandfather was a major on the staff of George Washington in the revolutionary war and her father was a soldier in the war of 1812. Mrs. Duncan remembers well the magnificent display of falling stars which was visible on the night of November 13, 1896.

Despite her advanced age she enjoys perfect health, her eyesight is good and she moves about as would one many years her junior.

Memorial Services.

The Lexington Camp U. C. V., Sterling Price Chapter U. D. C., and Weightman Camp U. S. C. V. will unite in a memorial service at Mapleah cemetery at 4 o'clock p. m., Tuesday, June 3rd, the decoration day of the confederacy.

On that day crosses of honor will be conferred on veterans and a suitable and interesting program rendered.

All are invited to attend and assist in decorating the graves of the confederate dead buried there. w2

Capt. Logan Eoyart, of Nebraska City, Neb., returned to his home Thursday evening, after a few days visit to friends and relatives.

CONFEDERATE REMINISCENCE

Sharp Contest on for Davis Mansion at Montgomery, Ala.

WAR AMONG D. O. C. DIVISIONS.

White House Association Trying to Save the Historic Building.

A recent dispatch from Montgomery, Alabama, says:

The fine old southern mansion in which, as president of the southern confederacy, Jefferson Davis resided during the few months before the capital was removed from Montgomery to Richmond is just now a center of interest. Some years ago the Alabama division of the Daughters of the Confederacy decided that they would buy the old place and preserve it as a museum and library. A White House committee was duly appointed and instructed to proceed with the raising of the money. Later on one of the two Montgomery chapters turned against the enterprise and set about to abolish the work. Out of the struggle two more chapters were evolved in this city, so that there are now two on each side of the proposition.

The committee, finding that it could not legally hold property, procured a charter for a new concern called the First White House Association, and after some of the most charming lobby work ever seen about the Alabama capitol, secured the passage through the last legislature of a bill appropriating \$2,500 for the purchase of the house in the name of the new association. But the governor vetoed the bill. Nothing daunted, they have continued the work and now have in hand some \$1,500.

At several meetings of the state division there has been a sharp struggle over abolishing the enterprise, but the White House faction has always won. Wearing of the struggle, they let it go by default at the annual convention, which has just been held in Demopolis, and the work was not only abolished but the committee ordered to turn over its funds to the general treasury, to be used for some other purpose. This is where the interesting part of the story comes in.

MRS. DAVIS' AID ENLISTED.

About four years ago the White House Committee went to Beauvoir and procured from Mrs. Jefferson Davis as a gift the most valuable mementos of her husband now in existence, being his complete set of bedroom furniture just as he used it in his last days, with all the little bric-a-brac about the house. Mrs. Davis gave the relics in a letter to the White House Committee in perpetuity, to be taken care of by the governor of Alabama at the capitol until such time as the Montgomery White House should be purchased and ready for them. They now occupy a room at the capitol and are the center of interest to all visitors.

The question has been a live one as to what would become of these valuable relics in case the daughters abandoned the work of preserving the White House as the designated repository in the deed of gift.

The new White House Association, to everybody's surprise, announces that it is prepared for just such an emergency, and presents a last will and testament by Mrs. Davis herself giving them over to that association in event the daughters ever abolish the work. The will was made last March, and was especially designed to meet the contingency that has arisen from the victory of the White House opponents at Demopolis. The opposition is thus taken unawares, the new association will carry on the work of preserving the old mansion and the relics of Mr. Davis pass from the White House Committee to the White House Association.

The White House itself is held at \$5,000 by the owner, and the design is to move it to a lot adjoining the grounds of the state capitol.

Joseph Tribble and wife left for Wellington Friday morning to attend the funeral of his nephew, Dan Goan.